Strategic Staff Development Project

Theme Two: Defining and supporting the strategic leadership role

Development Opportunities for Strategic Staff Developers

Origins and Future Support

The opportunities described here emerged from a project on Strategic Staff Development funded by the Leadership Foundation. This has had as its major premise the need for staff developers to operate strategically. Its three themes addressed different aspects of this need.

Theme One – led by Paul Blackmore (Coventry) produced outputs that will help senior managers within institutions to reflect upon their options in relation to staff development (broadly defined) and to make more strategic use of their staff developers.

Theme Two – whose outputs are described here, was led by Andy Wilson (Loughborough). Its target audience is staff development leaders and aspirant leaders.

Theme Three – led by Paddy Anstey (UEA) has staff development practitioners as its audience and its focus is on the development of their skills.

It quickly became clear that sustained support would be needed if the work of the three themes was to have a long-term effect. This support will be provided by the Staff Development forum; a number of SDF sponsored events have already taken place, and more are planned.

Overview

This paper outlines the development opportunities that will be made available to staff developers to help you operate (even) more strategically.

These proposals derive from survey work, interviews, consultations (both formal and informal), discussions at SDF meetings, and from an awareness of development elsewhere.

The paper offers brief discussions of the: rationale; capability model; opportunities, and resources.

The Rationale

During the work on theme two it soon became apparent that staff developers occupy very varied positions within their institutions and that their roles differ hugely. (See *Survey Report on Staff and Educational Development Leaders including Views on Strategic Leadership.*) The original proposal to develop a programme was therefore extended to include a diverse range of support and development processes.

The survey identified the following as having been useful or being seen as likely to be so:

- 360° appraisal.
- Action learning.
- Cross-sector working and exposure outside of HE.
- Experience on the job and both inside and outside of HE
- Leadership programmes.
- Mentors/coaches both within and beyond SD.
- More time, space and money.
- Networking, collaboration, sharing ideas and learning from others.
- Project work, research and updating theory.
- Secondments.

Not all of these could be provided by the project, but some could be encouraged. Details of outputs and events are provided later. The shaping of these owed much to the members of the Theme Two Team, to those who participated in the various events run during the project, to those involved with the other themes, and to the leaders of the Staff Development Forum.

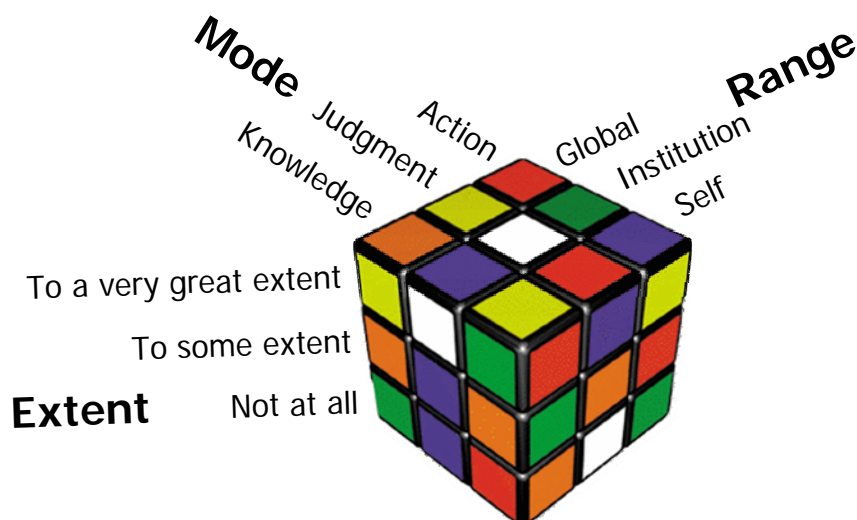The core members of the Theme Two Team have been:

- Claire Bradshaw, Loughborough
- Richard Dales, Coventry
- Sue Petrie, Derby
- Sandy Wilkie, St Andrews
- Andy Wilson, Loughborough

Such processes clearly needed to be ongoing if they were to have more than a minor impact. We therefore decided to see the project as the first stage in a process that would ultimately create a sustainable mechanism for supporting strategic staff development. In the short-term this suggested guidance materials and capacity building. Sustainability will – in the long term – depend on pro bono contributions by experienced staff developers and on the availability of a limited infrastructure. These will be managed through the Staff Development Forum.

The Capability Model

There was much discussion on the idea of a capability framework. We did not want to replicate the many other versions already available but we did want to offer something that emphasised strategic behaviour. We also wanted something that would integrate with the development of less experienced staff, and hence with the work of Theme 3.

The result was a three-dimensional approach that – in its simple form – looks like this.

Mode: Knowledge, Judgment, Action

Range: Global, Institution, Self

Extent: To a very great extent, To some extent, Not at all

This shows three dimensions of staff development behaviour and is not confined just to leaders. The leaders of Theme 3 see it as a useful framework.

The cube can be developed into more subtle forms and a capability framework, based on the cube, is available.

It is anticipated that this approach will be a starting point for individual discussions with staff development leaders and aspirant leaders. It could also be used as the basis for a 360 degree diagnostic.

Development Opportunities

In the long-term sustainable state it is anticipated that the following support will be available through the Staff Development Forum:

- 360 degree diagnostics
- Action learning sets
- Coaching and mentoring
- Personal development discussions
- Support for using development tools
- Workshops of operating strategically

Key to your engagement with these processes will be the initial personal development discussion with an experienced colleague.

In the short term, we will have a transitional stage during which development opportunities will be provided to help staff developers acquire and enhance the skills and knowledge that they need in order to support their fellow staff developers. Some guidance is already available. More will be produced and there will be a major capacity-building event in the autumn. See the final page for a copy of Sandy Wilkie's email.

It is worth recognising that an important additional benefit from this approach is that staff developers will be able to apply many of these techniques within their own institutions as well as with their peers.

Resources from Theme Two

Resource	Author(s)	Comment/Status
360° Diagnostics for Strategic Leadership of Staff Development (pp 47)	Catherine Garner	• Based on her experience of using negotiated 360s at Bristol • Available by request from Andy Wilson
Action Learning Guidance	Members of the Autumn Event Team and the DALEK Project Team	• These resources will be produced for the Autumn Event being organised by Claire Bradshaw and Sandy Wilkie
Coaching and Mentoring Guidance	Members of the Autumn Event Team	• These resources will be produced for the Autumn Event being organised by Claire Bradshaw and Sandy Wilkie
Guidance on Using Psychometric Tools	Members of the Autumn Event Team	• These resources will be produced for the Autumn Event being organised by Claire Bradshaw and Sandy Wilkie
Operating Strategically in Staff Development (pp 46)	Andrew Wilson	• Advice to staff development leaders and aspirants on operating strategically. • Available on the website.
Strategic Leadership - Diagnostic Tool – User Guide (pp 4)	Richard Dales	• The guide to using the tool. • Available on the website.
Strategic Leadership - Diagnostic Tool (pp 12)	Richard Dales, Sue Petrie and Andrew Wilson	• An interactive Excel spreadsheet. It can be used as a self-diagnostic tool, with a peer or mentor, or as the basis for a 360 degree diagnostic. • Available on the website.
Survey Report on Staff and Educational Development Leaders including Views on Strategic Leadership (pp 45)	Richard Dales and Andrew Wilson	• The results of the survey and follow-up interviews on what constitutes strategic behaviour. • Available on the website.

SDF Autumn Event - 18-19 October 2006

Dear Colleague

- Are you interested to hear about CPD options for you as a Staff Development leader or practitioner?
- As a SD practitioner, would you be interested in getting some real skills and exposure to both Mentoring and Coaching?

Arising out of the Strategic Staff Development (SSD) project, the Staff Development Forum* is pleased to sponsor an Autumn Event for staff/organisational/educational developers at Loughborough University on 18-19 October 2006. Designed to give you a comprehensive overview of CPD mechanisms (Day 1), and if required (on Day 2) an in-depth look at, and taste of, the skills required for Mentoring and Coaching, the event will also signal the first steps towards cross-HEI Mentoring links and potential Coaching accreditation options for staff developers.

A flyer with more details on the event content and fee structure will be issued shortly. As a guide, participation in both days as a practitioner is likely to cost around £150-160 per head, including all meals & accommodation. A Day 1 only rate will be in the region of £75. In the meantime, early indications of interest in registering for this new SDF Autumn Event should be made direct to Wendy Mason wendy.mason@lfhe.ac.uk or Louise Taylor louise.taylor@lfhe.ac.uk

Demand for places at this flagship SDF Autumn Event is likely to be very high, so please indicate your potential interest asap to secure a place. Not sure about getting involved? Go on, you deserve to give your own CPD some attention...

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